



THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF HADDONFIELD

Greenfield Hall

VOL. 32 No. 3

343 Kings Highway East, Haddonfield, New Jersey 08033

SEPTEMBER 1988

GENERAL MEETING

On September 22nd, the Historical Society will be fortunate to host as its guest speaker Mr. John Forster, AIA, a local architect who participated with "Mission 66". This was the project name for the implementation, restoration and future maintenance of Independence National Park and the Society Hill Section of Philadelphia which began in 1956.

The program will deal with the developmental stages, the criteria for selecting the sections of Chestnut and Walnut Streets for inclusion in the project and the reconstruction which was done. The discussion will review the on-going maintenance program which will enable future generations to relive our country's beginnings. The presentation will be followed by a question and answer period.

Please Note: This general meeting will be held in the Society's Headquarters, Greenfield Hall at 8 p.m., on September 22nd.

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Sometime ago, the Long-Range Planning Committee realized that the Society had reached a crucial stage: It could either remain as it was, which, in a sense, is going backward, or it could seek professional guidance in planning for the future and setting priorities.

The Committee, with the approval of the Executive Council, chose the latter course. In May, a representative from the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts, Philadelphia, spent an entire day at **Greenfield Hall**, interviewing the officers and committee chairpersons, examining the collections from basement to the third floor, taking light and humidity readings in every room and investigating the Society's security and fire detection systems.

The results of the survey were presented to the Society in mid-August. After thorough documentation of what the day's study revealed, the report stated, "Many of the treasures contained in the Society are the artifacts of a collective cultural heritage. They therefore deserve equal care in this lifetime so that they can be preserved for future

generations to use and appreciate." To achieve that goal, the report recommended: "To prepare for the long-term preservation of its collections, the Society is advised to develop a five- to ten-year phased conservation plan. Issues that need to be addressed include:

- planning for preservation
- space (in)adequacies, including environmental, security and fire prevention upgrades
- funding for the facility's continued progress and support as well as consultation services
- staffing to carry out the plan."

The report concluded, "The Society may have a long way to go, but its potential is great."

It is now up to us—officers, trustees, committee chairpersons and all members of the Society to begin to implement immediately those recommendations we can, develop the long-range plans and begin to implement them.

Patricia W. Lennon
President



Eighty Years Ago

(Excerpts from a paper presented to the Society in 1933 by Sarah Rodman Murray).

INTRODUCTION

Between 1929 and 1937, Sarah Rodman Murray (Mrs. Gustavus M.) presented to the Historical Society thirty hand-written manuscripts about people, places and events she recalled as a life-long resident of Haddonfield. She did not rely entirely on her own memory, but consulted her contemporaries to confirm dates, names, etc. Of her reminiscences, she said, "They have the merit of being fact, not fiction . . . whatever (they) may lack in a literary point of view." She called her papers "Sketches of Old Haddonfield," and wrote, "What I have done involved a great amount of work altho it has been a great pleasure to me in the doing of it." When she wrote "Eighty Years Ago," Mrs. Murray was, herself, in her 83rd year. Join Mrs. Murray as she travels back in time and take "great pleasure" in sharing her recollections of Haddonfield as it once was and never will be again.

HADDONFIELD AND ITS ENVIRONS

Eighty years ago Haddonfield was just a small village, said to resemble an English town. Some idea of its size may be gained when I tell you that when a child I would often amuse myself by closing my eyes—concentrate, we would call it now—and counting each house on each street, I could visualize the faces of the occupants. In my counting I did not include Batesville, at that time called "The Point". Now, there are twenty-eight miles of paved streets in the town!

The trees were very beautiful. As I am far-sighted, I could stand where the railroad tracks cross Kings Highway, and see almost to Mann's Hill through the archway the branches formed across the street. On the road to Evans' Mill—the "Mill Road", it was called—stood a persimmon tree, just inside the fence. After frost had ripened the fruit, we children would go there after school to gather any fallen persimmons. Years have passed since I have heard the name mentioned. The eating of the fruit was a venture in faith, for like the little girl of familiar rhyme

*"When they were good, they were very, very good,
And when they were bad, they were horrid."*

That tree on the old Mill Road is the only persimmon tree of which I have any remembrance. There were mulberry trees, but the fruit was so unwholesome they must have been allowed to die, for certainly there are none there now.

GARDENS

Each home included vegetable and flower gardens, and a stable. Any child whose home did not include a stable lost

half of the pleasure of childhood. Nearly everybody had an herb bed, where parsley, sweet basil, thyme, catnip, dill, sage, sweet marjoram, horehound, mint, etc., flourished. The sage bush was stripped of its leaves from time to time during the summer. New leaves would sprout out for the next stripping. The leaves of all these herbs were dried and put away for the winter's use. We all had flower gardens, some very simple—just a tangle of bloom—while others were more elaborate, with box-bordered beds and narrow winding paths around and between the beds. But always there were roses galore. The blossom petals were dried, put in bags, and placed in bureau drawers and among the linens. Some of the petals went to make the fragrant pot-pourri. Nowadays, we are developing a love for the flowers our grandmothers grew—love-in-a-mist, old man, old woman, lad's love, bergamot, lady's slipper, pinks, phlox, moses-in-the-bulrushes, and others.

FOOD

There was no fruit shipped in those days from California or Florida; no cold storage plants nor refrigerator cars. Apples were the standbys and were stored for winter, like potatoes. There were no refrigerators; but cellars were deep and cool, with hard earthen floors.

In those days food was never canned, for there were no airtight jars made. Catsup, cucumber pickles, pepper hash and apple butter were made. The fruit that was prepared for the winter's use was as sweet as jelly and was called jam, conserve and preserves. Apples were pared, cored and sliced then strung on strings and hung up to dry. A one-crust pie made from dried apples with an egg added, and flavored with grated dried orange peel, was not to be "sneezed at." Lima beans were spread out to dry with the pods on, then shelled for winter's use. Corn was cut from the cob and dried, or else placed in stone crocks, sprinkled with salt between the layers. Dried corn turned dark, but that packed down with salt retained its natural color. Apples, for a treat, were often set out of doors to freeze, and the contents scooped out with a spoon when frozen. Apple dumplings were great favorites, boiled, not baked as we have them now.

Most people bought their coffee green, drying the berries in pans in a slow oven. Every house had a coffee-mill in which each morning's coffee was freshly ground. Spices were sold unground, and, when used for sweet pickles, were tied in small bags and cooked with the fruit, being removed when the fruit was "put up." Small spice mills were used for grinding spices. I had one that belonged to my husband's grandmother. It looked like a toy coffee-mill.

When cold weather came, meat was cooked, and jars were filled with the delicious mince meat which would furnish material for pies at intervals all winter long. In those days almost everything eaten that was not boiled, or baked in the oven, was cooked in the frying pan. Everybody owned great iron pots, and even the tea-kettles were made of iron. People ate whatever they craved, regardless of whether it was fried, baked or boiled; thankful for the money with which to pay for it; joyfully ignorant of vitamins, calories, proteins, and all unmindful of the germs waiting to "Git you, ef you don't watch out."

FASHION

Shawls were the accepted thing for street wear and for week-day Church. Of course, "for best" as it was termed, the handsome Paisley and Valley Cashmere shawls were worn by the favored few. In those days, eighty years ago, women wore "blanket shawls," woolen stockings, woolen underwear, flannel petticoats, and quilted silk and satin ones, which were often heirlooms. No matter where a woman was bent, or how garbed, always there must be donned three or four petticoats! If the woman in the average well-to-do family bought one new silk dress a year, preferably black, she felt amply equipped, sartorially, for any occasion which might arise, from a wedding to a funeral.

In those days an excess of weight, or a lack of it never troubled any woman. If a woman "favored" the stout side of a house, and was more chubby than the usual run of women, that was that! She accepted it, just as she accepted the color of her eyes or the shape of her nose. While, if she favored the lean side of the house and was rather "peaked," woman-like she rose superior to the handicap and readily supplied nature's deficiencies by donning a few more petticoats, crinoline, a bustle, and even raw cotton, as the mode demanded!

MEDICINAL REMEDIES

When I was a child, each winter I suffered from severe sore throat—hence, my deafness. There were burnt alum to be applied to my tonsils, poultices of salt to be wrapped around my throat, applications of nitrate of silver. As I was nearing recovery, when my throat was examined, my teeth also came in for their share of attention. All the little first teeth showing decay were noted, and to my utter dismay I was ordered to come to (the doctor's) office when spring came to have them taken out. To my great disgust he invariably seated me in a chair on the side porch, *facing the street*, with his son to grasp me tight. That added insult to injury! As I recall it, it never was painful in the least, but if I had been offered a prize for ill manners, I think I could not have behaved worse.

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ANNUAL AUCTION



Saturday, October 1, 1988

10:00 a.m. — 3:00 p.m., (*preview 9:00 a.m.*)

Please attend and invite your friends to attend.

You may bring your donation for the auction to the garage
Monday — Friday, 9:30 a.m. — 11:30 a.m., beginning Monday, September 19th.

CONSIGNMENT: We will accept items (old and new) of an approximate minimum \$100.00 value to sell on consignment with a commission of 20% of the auction sale price. If the item isn't sold it is returned to you at no charge. We would appreciate your inviting your friends to make donations and consignments as well. If you have any questions, please call Nancy Burrough at (609) 429-8361.

Plan on attending the auction and inviting your friends as we never know what treasures will emerge from the renowned attics of Haddonfield.

The Historical Society of Haddonfield
343 Kings Highway East
Haddonfield, NJ 08033

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MEDICINAL REMEDIES *(cont'd)*

When it came to sickness, or the warding it off, great stress was laid on hot drinks. In the spring sulphur and molasses were administered. Then again, tea made from sassafras, catnip and other herbs was given. A syrup made from horehound was a sovereign remedy for colds. When the mouth was sore, sage tea made an acceptable mouthwash. Jamestown ("Jimson") weed was a relief for sufferers from asthma when dried and smoked in a pipe. If one of my family were so unfortunate as to suffer from a sprained back, or a backache of any kind, there was always available my great-grandmother's recipe for a wonderful plaster. That plaster, or mixture of it, was

fearfully and wonderfully concocted from beeswax, resin, turpentine and other things. When it was sufficiently cooked, spread on muslin, and applied to the affected part, it was supposed to stay there until the pain and soreness were entirely cured. It stayed!! When the time came to part with that plaster, the natural thing to do seemed to be to deal gently with it, easing it off by degrees, little by little. The approved method for removing a plaster compounded of beeswax, resin and turpentine was firmly to grasp one loosened end, then pull the whole thing off with one jerk. I write from painful experience.